

# PHAROS

*A beacon of hope in the darkness*

*Newsletter of the Reading Prostate Cancer Support Group (RPCSG)*

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## THE MARCH 2023 MEETING

The March meeting began with the AGM (Annual General Meeting) that was attended by 44 RPCSG members. The AGM included the voting of committee members to continue their terms of office and minutes of the AGM can be found in the web site [rpcsg.org.uk](http://rpcsg.org.uk) in the 'Newsletter and AGM' tab.

Then a talk was given by Tessa Higgins who has been a Cancer Rehabilitation Level IV exercise instructor since 2016 and has been a health related exercise instructor for over 20 years. She has held many exercise classes for our members using Zoom. Much of Tessa's presentation is applicable to many types of cancer but she targeted the presentation to prostate cancer. Tessa stressed the importance of exercise both before and after cancer treatment.

Tessa said that exercise has been shown to help to reduce the side effects of hormone, chemotherapy and radiation therapies, and also to enhance the effectiveness of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Exercise can also delay disease progression and improve survival.

Exercise is one of the most important ways to mitigate the cardiovascular and metabolic risks of Androgen Deprivation Therapy (ADT) and reduce the side effects. Research shows that progressive exercise (building up to 150 mins per week) is arguably the best medical management strategy to reduce treatment related fatigue.



Research shows that men who complete 2-3 sessions of progressive resistance training per week minimise the loss in muscle mass and strength.

Preliminary research shows that at least 2 sessions of resistance training per week may mitigate losses in bone density, and impact exercises such as jumping and hopping may preserve bone density more effectively than resistance and aerobic exercise alone.

Exercise has some metabolic benefits in that it can mitigate diabetes, cardiovascular disease, blood sugar, cholesterol and triglyceride levels.



Other benefits include improved mood, distress, anxiety and depression, and an increase in longevity.

Exercise can manage the side effects of hormone, radiation and chemotherapy treatments. It can help to reduce fatigue and increase muscle mass and strength.

Tessa then talked about how much exercise should be taken and for how long. It is recommended to start with easily achievable targets and then to gradually work up to more vigorous exercise. The ideal for a healthy patient is to accumulate 75 minutes of vigorous exercise and 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week, plus two or more resistance training sessions.

Aerobic exercise is physical activity that increases the heart rate, and resistance exercise sessions should involve 6 to 8 exercises that activate all major muscle groups of the body.

For men on hormone therapy exercises should prevent or slow down the loss of bone mass. Impact exercises such as stamping, heel drops and hopping, should be done about 4 times per week with each session having around 50 impacts.

Training sessions should be spread across the week, and patients with extensive fatigue or illness should do exercises in sessions of 5 to 10 minutes throughout the day.

Physical activity can take several forms, for example walking indoors or out, gardening, climbing stairs, cleaning a house. It is important to find things that you enjoy and happily participate in.

There are numerous sports clubs and online sessions to suit all tastes. Tessa offered to help you to find local groups and classes by contacting her by email at [tlhiggins@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tlhiggins@hotmail.co.uk)

Tessa then invited the audience to stand up to participate in some easy stretching and flexing exercises that she demonstrated. This was enjoyed by the audience and Tessa for thanked for her talk and demonstration.

Tessa's slides are on our website [here](#).

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## **NEXT MEETING**

The April meeting will be held on the 14<sup>th</sup> April; this is not our usual first Friday of the month this time as the 7<sup>th</sup> is Good Friday when the church will be rather busy.

The meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> April will be a talk by GP Anant Sanchez, on the subject of prostate cancer from the GP's aspect. More detail of this talk will be sent to you before the meeting.

## RPCSG WALKS AND COFFEE MORNINGS

The enjoyable walk in March started in Hambleden and stopped at The Frog in Skirmett for refreshments.

*Photographs taken during the March walk from Hambleden to Skirmett:*



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Steve Parkinson  
Newsletter Editor.  
[NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com](mailto:NewsEditorRPCSG@yahoo.com)

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